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“THAT EVERLASTING ANDOVER CONTRO- VERSY.”

EVEN while meditating a still further attack upon their peace, one cannot withhold sympathy from those amiable but secular newspapers which feel obliged to report all news, yet have naturally a prejudice in favor of the news of this world. Protection, earthquakes, the Eastern question, Home Rule, are known factors in the problem ; but what satisfaction can there be in discussing the shadowy intangible politics of the unseen universe ? Thus, not understanding its terms, yet with contempt a little held in check by the knowledge that the dispute has something to do with religion, and must, therefore, not be too savagely condemned or too lightly dismissed, the genial but perplexed editor gives his daily ecclesiastical items as needs must, but in one breath excuses his ignorance, and relieves while veiling his impatience, with no harsher a characterization than “that everlasting Andover controversy.”

All for love and nothing for rebuke, I timidly approach these representative men of affairs, and—if for a moment the vigilance of this REVIEW can be evaded—appropriate a few of its pages for their enlightenment. I wish to show them—not necessarily because I am wiser than they, but because I have had more leisure to examine the matter—that it is a question of this world primarily, though of the other world consequently.

The average unprofessional opinion, the opinion, let us say, of the laity of Philadelphia, and Boston, and New York seems to be : old orthodoxy has the technical right ; new orthodoxy has the common sense. Old orthodoxy is absurd, but so long as the Andover professors engage to teach it, they ought to teach it or leave. If they no more believe it, they ought to relinquish the funds bequeathed for such teaching and found a new school for the inculcation of their own creed. The laity do not, perhaps,

go so far as the clergy, intimating against the Andover professors "the most stupendous breach of trust of a century, not unmarked by such crimes." The laity, even at the trial of the professors, rejected this suggestion of their own clients, imputed no breach of trust on the part of the defendants; on the contrary, proclaimed belief in them as eminently honorable, able, upright, conscientious, Christian men, but mistaken in their position.

Judge Hoar, the advocate of old orthodoxy, at the trial of the professors compared the case to that of an English landlady who would not allow a heathen boarder to sacrifice a bull to Jupiter in her back parlor. She did not forbid freedom of thought, but her back parlor was no place for its indulgence in that peculiar form. So, argued Judge Hoar, the back parlor of the Andover Seminary is no place to teach even the doctrines of the Christian religion, if those doctrines are inconsistent with the Andover Creed. I suppose Judge Hoar could hardly find anything more inconsistent with his idea of the doctrines of the Christian religion than his idea of the doctrines of the Andover Creed.

In like manner, the Boston *Advertiser* expresses probably a wide-spread lay opinion when it affirms that there are very many laymen who do not coincide with the complainants' theological opinions who yet agree with them to this extent: that whether the Andover creed itself is theologically sound or not, still the trust by which the Seminary is mainly supported demands strict adherence to the letter of the creed; and for the sake of perfect honesty, therefore, and as an example of the fulfillment of the letter of an obligation, much needed in these days, it would be better that further enjoyments of those old bequests should cease than that the slightest suspicion of their perversion should go forth to the world at large.

This is a phase of the question to which too little attention has been paid, and which is certainly indispensable to a fair and considerate understanding of the conservative side of the controversy.

Professor Phelps, late of the Andover Seminary, yet more strongly maintains the same point. Even if new Andover has the law, he says, honor should restrain them. "Should it be sufficient for honorable men if, in law, the liberty they are assuming cannot be rebuked? Should it even content them that the Supreme Court of Massachusetts would not remove them from their chairs?"

He considers it mere hardihood to think that those robust believers and docile readers of the word of God, the founders, would have approved the exotic faith of the Andoverians, if it had been imported in their day, and, therefore, the professors should make it a point of honor not to teach it, although the Creed says nothing about it.

Rev. Dr. Bartol, whose white hairs would be his glory, except, as we learn from the reminiscences of his late happy anniversary, that the bright brow of his earliest manhood was equally radiant with saintly purity—Dr. Bartol cheers on the Andover professors to what he thinks a firmer footing, maintaining that now they are technically wrong. Col. Ingersoll, who has done good service in flushing the sewer-pipes of ecclesiasticism, but who will not be content to dwell in indecency forever, decides, after his præ-Raphaelitic fashion, that the money was given to Andover by a barbarian, and that the question in that Seminary now is: Shall we lose this money, or shall we teach what we know to be lies, out of pure economy, and save what is given us?

Conservative orthodoxy deliberately sums up its decision: "We have little hesitation in declaring our conviction that the complainants are substantially right in their position, and that the Andover professors are not to be justified in their claim that they have a right to teach probation after death under the Creed. The accused seem to us to do violence both to the plain language of the statutes, where it at all approaches the subject of probation, and elsewhere, to the probable intention of the founders."

It thus appears that conservative orthodoxy, liberal Christianity, secular common sense, and ultra radicalism, unite in condemning the Andover professors. Nevertheless, the Andover professors are right, and all the others are wrong. If the Andover professors should give up the contest and withdraw from the Seminary, they would be guilty of a breach of the trust confided to them by the founders. It is not necessarily stupid in outside circles to misunderstand the case, but it is not wise to pronounce upon it until it is understood, and it cannot be understood without attention to the meaning, the use, and the weight of words. We are so accustomed to speak words with a hop, and read them with a skip, and pronounce judgment upon them with a jump, that when important issues are involved we rush wildly astray.

The Andover professors are treating words with accuracy.

They understand the case. It is their business to understand it. They are experts. If they should of their own will withdraw, it could not be from misunderstanding. It would be from faint-heartedness. If the Supreme Court should decide against them they might be forced to retire. While that would terminate their connection with the Seminary, it would be no guilt of their own, and no final settlement of the question involved, for this is a battle which is never fought until it is won.

The struggle is really not, as the world maintains, over the acceptance of the Creed, but over the interpretation of the Creed. The present professors accept the Creed. The outside world says they ought not to accept it. Must the professors, the modern experts, the men who have made the Creed the study of their life, must they relinquish it, actually or constructively, because the journal editors, the lawyers, the pastors, and the previous generation of experts think they ought? That is, must a man guide his life by his own conscience and consciousness or by other persons? The founders of Andover prescribed only that professors should accept and teach the Creed. They did not prescribe how it should be interpreted. The professors swear that they do accept and teach it. Who shall say them nay?

Old orthodoxy charges that they interpret it so differently from the founders that it amounts to a rejection of the Creed.

It would be possible in such a case to fall back on a legal or verbal quibble and be technically right while committing a moral wrong. But there is even no temptation here. On the contrary, the interpretation of the Creed by the professors is wholly in the direction towards which the faces of the founders were turned—that of greater spirituality, increasing reasonableness. What is rejected is the grosser, the more ignorant interpretation. In this they are but treading a little further the same path which the founders trod, and which has been trodden by every intelligent professor since, and by the whole Christian world, so far as it has advanced in spiritual and intellectual life.

A single example will give ample illustration. The Creed declares that the wicked at their death will “with devils be plunged into the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone forever and ever.”

The founders may well have taken this literally. A little child at play within sound of the Bow Bells of Andover heard some one

say that the world was coming to an end in three years. Alone in the attic shortly afterwards she was startled by a chime ringing suddenly through the corridors of memory—"where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched." She fancied she must be mistaken. The fire could be borne, but the worm was intolerable. She ran down stairs to the Bible, and was dismayed to find that the worm was there. But it was only for a moment. Happily the swift reflection came, "It will be three years first. By that time I shall be nine years old and pious." The worm, therefore, would be nothing to her, and she resumed her play with tranquillity. So easily the mind innocent of science disposes of unscientific statements.

The founders of Andover were hardly more disturbed by chemistry, geology, biology, ethnology, comparative philology, than was the little girl. They "overset" the Greek into English and left it there. But do the most conservative of orthodoxy to-day believe that brimstone is eternal; that oxygenation can go on forever? Do they believe that spirit can be subjected to the combustion of sulphur? Do they believe that the immaterial soul is wedded to the chemical change of matter? Mr. Samuel Jones lately electrified to shrieks a Boston congregation with a story of a thoroughly materialistic Devil chasing a lost and departing soul around a wood pile and through a window,—which is in line with a part of the Andover Creed; but it is impossible to believe that the Andover complainants would join that hunting. Unless they would, unless they consider it possible to plunge a disembodied soul into actual burning brimstone, unless, that is, they believe that a Calistoga hot spring may be as everlasting as the spirit of man, they have no ground for even a "friendly law suit" with the Andover professors. Judge Hoar, and Dr. Bartol, and Colonel Ingersoll, trained in other schools, may mischievously insist upon the literal rendering or none; but no member of an orthodox Congregational church who dissolves the scriptural brimstone in rhetoric can refuse to the Andover professors liberty to put a rhetorical cast or a literary interpretation upon any other word in the Creed. One old departure from the literal rendering carries all new departures with it. There is no tribunal in the world which has authority to say: thus far shalt thou go, and no farther, in latitude of interpretation.

Applying the principles of the complainants to this illustra-

tion, we find that Colonel Ingersoll would say that barbarians inserted the text in the Creed, that hypocrites teach it for money, and that it is simply a lie. This disposition of the matter has the merit of a simplicity so primitive that one hardly understands why its author should count any other man a barbarian.

The moderate and reasonable layman and the "liberal" clergyman do not believe in the literal brimstone, yet consider that the trust fund by which the Seminary is supported demands literal brimstone, and for the sake of perfect honesty and to set a much-needed good example, they think it would be better to give up the bequest than to let the slightest suspicion of perversion of funds go out to the world on account of the quality of the brimstone.

In phraseology more complicated, this is one with the opinion of Colonel Ingersoll. Neither is more superficial than is to be expected from persons who are able to give only a swift glance to what needs a close inspection. It may be remarked that the principle of the moderate layman is fundamentally wrong. Avoidance of suspicion is not one of the large bases of action. If it were, the rule of a man's life would be changed from the certainty of his own conscience and consciousness to the shifting conjectures of another man's ignorance. It would make the ship sail for the wind and not for port. A ship heeds the wind, but does not follow it. A man heeds suspicion, but is not dominated by it. It may be his primal duty to disregard it. It is never his duty to do one wrong thing in order to avoid the suspicion of doing another.

Professor Phelps rather slips away from the letter of the Creed into undemonstrable generalities, and questions whether it is honorable to teach what is, indeed, outside of the Creed, but what, if it had come up in their day, the founders would have put into the Creed for rejection. This is not quite to the point, but so far as it is to the point, the question is not whether, if the new theology had been taken back a hundred years, the founders would have accepted it, but whether if the founders were brought forward a hundred years they would accept it. To this, one could unhesitatingly answer yes, because they accepted the best light of their day, as their heirs and assigns accept the best light of to-day.

Conservative orthodoxy, under stress of science, weakens a little, and what Col. Ingersoll calls a lie the complainants are willing to call a figure; but beyond that, conservatism refuses to budge. It gives way on one word, but utterly declines to permit any one

to give way on another. It sees that science, chemistry, metaphysics, have made brimstone not only impossible, but ridiculous as a corner-stone of theology; but *forever* is a term of another world, beyond the domain of science, incapable of proof or disproof, and on that word they make a stand.

“The statutes expressly forbid the retention in office of any professor who does not continue to approve himself ‘a man of sound and orthodox principles of divinity, *agreeably to the system of evangelical doctrines contained in the Westminster Assembly’s Shorter Catechism,*’” says Rev. J. W. Haley. But, questions a puzzled disciple, “Dr. Park said to Dr. Codman that he never believed, and never would believe, the doctrine taught in No. 82 of the Assembly’s Catechism. In the opinion of the Visitors, to deny that doctrine was to overturn the gospel. Were not the Visitors blameworthy in allowing Professor Park to subscribe?”

“We have always understood,” replies the highest authority, “the Visitors to hold that any deviations from the exact letter of the Creed which did not impair its evangelical character were permissible, and that it was because Professor Park’s deviations were such that they were permitted. It is because later ones do not seem to be such, that they are objected to.”

It is thus seen that even the Professor Park orthodoxy does not demand strict adherence to the letter of the Creed, but only to such letters of the Creed as itself shall select. The most conservative permit departure from brimstone and No. 82—the things which themselves have been educated out of.

The present Andover professors are only doing a little more of the same work which their predecessors wrought so powerfully in their day. They not only permit the revelation of geology to illuminate the revelation of Sodom and Gomorrah, but they are studying it in the light of heredity and history. When the old orthodoxy explains that fire and brimstone mean that the soul of the incorrigibly wicked will be as exquisitely tortured as would be the body by fire, new orthodoxy sorrowfully admits it, but remembers that the sting of death is sin. The soul enslaved through all its life by sin; the soul that has persistently violated the law, disobeyed the order, destroyed the harmony of the Universe, may, in the revealing light of death, see itself so clearly, see the order of heaven so clearly, as to be devoured with shame and self-contempt—a shame and contempt more biting

and burning than the matter-entangled spirit can conceive. The light from which it could hide behind the flesh, it cannot avoid when the flesh is laid off. Light which is the life of the healthy eye is agony to the diseased eye. But death itself is to be swallowed up in victory. Is it not possible, asks the larger hope,—not seeing the way, seeing only apparent perturbations of the Divine harmony, which seem to mean that there must be a way, because the *Divine* harmony cannot be perturbed,—is it not possible that this spiritual shame shall presently destroy shameworthiness and work out spiritual purification?

But all the ground thus far gone over, though important, is incidental. The essential issue is as yet untouched. It is by no second thought, or strained construction, or late discovery, or even revered precedent, that the Andover professors hold their places. They are in the places appointed them by the founders themselves. They are there by a principle set in the solid base and actual sub-structure of the Creed. That Creed opens with a declaration which not only justifies the professors in holding their places, but which imposes upon them the obligation to hold their places especially against such efforts as are now making to destroy their incumbency, constituting it indeed a betrayal of trust, a dishonor to the founders to withdraw. The Creed embodies a principle which must last as long as time lasts, and can only be dismissed, if even then, by the wreck of matter and the crash of worlds.

By the terms of the Creed “Every professor on this foundation shall publicly make and subscribe a solemn declaration of his faith in Divine Revelation, and in the fundamental and distinguishing doctrines of the Gospel as expressed in the following Creed, which is supported by the infallible Revelation which God constantly makes of Himself in His works of creation, providence, and redemption.”

The principle prefacing the Creed is broader and deeper than any item of the Creed, because it underlies them all. It is the rule by which every one of them is to be tested. It is the foundation upon which they must all stand.

First is required—Faith in Divine Revelation.

Second—On this infallible Revelation the Creed stands. By this revelation the Creed is supported. Therefore the Creed is binding just so far as Revelation binds it, and no farther. The

reason of the Creed is in its harmony with Revelation. If in any point it diverges from Revelation it becomes void, by the will and provision of the founders.

Third—This infallible Revelation is not a completed thing, a fixed quantity. It is a Revelation which God is “constantly” making. Therefore, it is a progressive Revelation. Therefore, the Creed must change to conform to the changing Revelation. There is no meaning to the word *constantly*, unless it means this. Language is incapable of being used in evidence, unless *constantly* is a word of process. To say that God is constantly making a revelation of Himself, and yet that our knowledge of Him must never increase and our belief regarding Him must never change, is only absurdity. The founders imposed the Creed, which, in their view, formulated the revelation that had been made up to their time. But in imposing Revelation as the basis of the Creed, and in stipulating a recognition that God is “constantly” making this revelation, they, by inevitable implication, not only warrant, but impose, constant change in the Creed in order to conform to every fresh revelation.

That there might be no doubt of their meaning they specified the sources whence revelation should be expected.

Works of Creation : This includes every possible discovery of truth by study of the material universe till time shall be no more. Whatever light shall be thrown upon earth or stars from geology, biology, astronomy, chemistry, the founders welcome. Whatever illustrates or elucidates the real mode of creation, the properties of matter, they accept. For all the discoveries and utilities of steam, electricity, the story of the rocks and the suns, the suggestions of the skeleton and the embryo, they made room, only asking that it be a revelation of God ; that is, truth. No Darwin, or Huxley, or Tyndall, past, present, or future, can get outside the scope of those Andover founders, whom we in our shallow arrogance have called “iron-bound,” but whose principle, inspired of the Holy Spirit, is as flexible as life itself. It may well be that they did not know the full scope of their words, but that is ever the Divine reward of them who speak and do the best they know.

Revelation in Providence : This includes the whole history of humanity,—language, race, growth, migration, the rise and fall of nations, and of men, from the first rude trace of primeval man

upon the earth to the last item in the morning newspaper. The present is photographing itself to the student with a minuteness never excelled. Into the past, the scientist, the antiquarian, the Egyptologist, are searching with an enthusiasm constantly increasing under success, and a success ever conquering fresh advantages. But whatever revelation God has made or may make of Himself in His relations to men—through flint-knife, or exhumed statue, or uncovered tile, or deciphered record, or discovered manuscript, or long-buried city, the founders of Andover Seminary made provision for it all in the opening sentence, the ground plan of their Creed.

Revelation of Redemption brings us to the culmination of all Revelation—in Jesus Christ our Lord—the Holy Spirit of prophecy; the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. The written word remains. No addition can be made to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. Therefore, the revelation which God is constantly making of Himself in Redemption must be through new light thrown on the Bible, new light shining upon its interpretation from the new revelation of Himself through His works of creation and providence, through science and history. For this also the founders made room in that profound and wonderful opening sentence of their “iron-bound” Creed—a sentence which binds them, not with iron, but with the elasticity and strength of the interstellar ether to every sphere of truth that shall swing out into the light of new knowledge henceforth forevermore.

For the Andover professors to give up their Seminary to the old orthodoxy would be to give up the inspiration of the fathers to the limitations of the sons; would be to relinquish light to darkness, breadth to narrowness, growth to death, Heaven’s flash of radiance to earth’s brooding obscurity. It would be to snatch from the founders the glory of their crown, to hide its splendor beneath the *débris* of our own mechanisms. Repression may succeed, but it will be temporarily. If this age cannot discern the solemn and stately procession of thought, the next age will. It is better to fail in a good cause than to succeed in a bad one. But failure is not to be thought of. It seems to me that I see already, beautiful upon the mountains, the feet of Him that bringeth good tidings. Surely the air is alive and astir with the breath of a new spring.

GAIL HAMILTON.